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therefore, that this distinguished metricist has eclipsed all his predecessors in reproducing the movement of Anglo-Saxon verse:—there is still “room at the top.” J. L. HALL.

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THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN ENGLISH POETRY. By Arthur Symons.
New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. 1909.

Arthur Symons is a critic whose accomplished work in various fields of art will assure him a very wide circle of readers for his last volume, *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry*. At the outset of the new book, to speak frankly, he disappoints. His title calls for an interpretation of the literary period stretching from the seventeen-sixties to the eighteen-thirties, from the work of Percy and Horace Walpole to the death of Scott. That a development, a differentiation, a flowering period, a decline went on within the dates set, and that its dominant characteristics were romantic, is a fact of literary history as capable of demonstration as the movement of industrial revolution or of modern democracy. And the title leads us to expect of the book that it will interpret this great movement. But Mr. Symons's preface implies, or seems to imply, that no such movement—the conscious effort of many minds to develop in art some great aspect of man's vision of things—ever existed or possibly can exist. “In each one of the poets whom I want to study,” he tells us, his object is to find out “what he was in himself, what he made of himself in his work.” A laudable object, surely, but it is not “the Romantic Movement;” it would be to disregard the wood, the soil, the climate, in favor of the individual trees. He holds that “the great poets of every age but the eighteenth have been romantic;” and “the poet who typifies for us the eighteenth century is Pope, and Pope was not a poet” (p. 11). With that conception, the relation of his title to the contents of his book well-nigh vanishes. His Romantic Movement does not move. And it does not move, because Mr. Symons has an English disregard of the scholarship of his subject. “I have consulted,” Mr. Symons says,—shall I say, proudly?—“no histories of literature, nor essays about it.” The hen-house

in the story, some will recall, "looked like he made it himself." Mr. Symons's book is, then, an independent study of individual poets, even the insignificant and forgotten, in the Romantic period, not of the Romantic Movement, not of the relation of these poets to a common dominant vision they sought to realize. This study of the individual poets, however, allows the author an easy plan for the volume. He takes the poets born before 1800—from John Home in 1722 to Thomas Hood in 1799—eighty-seven in all—comments on each, with a final chapter on "the Minors,"—adding small-print notes on first editions; all gathered in a well-printed volume of 344 pages. Some of the poets considered, saved from oblivion otherwise perhaps only in Allibone or the Dictionary of National Biography—some Robert Tannahill or Bernard Barton—have only their few lines of requiescant inscription; but with the great ones—Wordsworth (20 pp.), Coleridge (24 pp.), Byron (24 pp.), Shelley (19 pp.), Keats (17 pp.)—the author develops highly wrought essays in miniature. And, again to speak frankly, there is not anywhere in the covers of a single volume of English criticism so much readable, illuminating comment, as here, on the greatest period of English poetry.

Mr. Symons has himself the poet's sympathy and intuition, the poet's gift of seeing analogies, the poet's gift of phrase and figure, and all these are exercised in company with a diligent—I am tempted to say prodigious—reading of the poets and the memoirs of the poets.

There are limitations, no doubt, to this critic's vision. Statements occur that are capable of disproof: "It is doubtful if Wordsworth was ever consciously under any special influence among his predecessors," (p. 18). A few minutes with Legouis (Chapter V) would have helped the critic here; and the very statement is contradicted by what Mr. Symons himself says later of the influence on Wordsworth of Crabbe and Burns. How shall we reconcile, "In his finest verse Coleridge had the finest style perhaps in English verse" (p. 163) with "Wordsworth at his best may seem the superior master of poetic style" (p. 314)? This reminds one of the fascinations of each "dear charmer" of the song. Of Shelley, "He aimed at moral perfec-

tion, but was really of a perfect æsthetic selfishness." The memoirs of Shelley yield abundant illustrations from his own life of this truth of his own line—

I am the friend of the unfriended poor.

Shelley's real world was indeed the world of ideas, but æsthetic selfishness surely does not characterize the poet who can write —

That power
Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

And with still deeper objection I should reject the judgment that "Shelley teaches us nothing, leads us nowhere, but cries and flies around us like a sea-bird." Mr. Symons here improvises on Arnold's famous "beautiful but ineffectual angel." Neither Arnold nor Symons has the truth about Shelley. For if any poet has taught the omnipotence of ideas, especially what Stopford Brooke called "the moralities of the heart in relation to the progress of mankind," it is Shelley. These things are, however, only spots on the sun, of little account in the large contribution the volume makes. Some of Mr. Symons's interpretations,—those, say, of Blake, of Coleridge, of Byron,—are perfect in insight and expression, "so such a thing should be."

Mr. Symons has a sense — a sense little short of genius — for happy quotation; and he quotes happily not only from the poets themselves, but from extensive reading of memoirs and (in spite of the preface) critical literature. The reader will be delighted and helped by the illuminating phrases that slip into some discussion, and the author, himself a maker of phrases, again and again, makes remarks that are contributions to the literature of criticism.

It is no slight pleasure to find garnered here many of the finest sayings on the art of poetry. "Poetry is apparent pictures of unapparent realities" (Zoroaster). "There are three powers in man conversing with Paradise — Poetry, Painting, and Music" (Blake). "Poetry is the best words in the best order" (Coleridge). "Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge" (Wordsworth). "Fine verses are those that exhale like sounds or perfumes" (Joubert). "I reckon myself a dab at prose—

verse I leave to my betters (Lamb). "I never quite despair, and I read Shakespeare" (Keats). "I shall dine late; but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select" (Landor).

Mr. Symons is himself a coiner of quotable things. The gift of epigram is his, and he lightens discussion with an ever-ready wit. In all his wit this critic never departs from his subject. With a fellow-critic it is different: Mr. Chesterton's critical work is largely Chesterton on Chesterton.

(Of Wordsworth) "Continual writing is really a bad form of dissipation." (Of Blake) "What was abnormal in him was his sanity." "Pope is the most finished artist in prose who ever wrote in verse." (Of Southey) "It is not that he is Christian; he is parochial . . . Southey wrecks many heavens and many hells, but does not quicken a pulse." "Since Rousseau, the virtues of forest folk were esteemed." "With the woman whom one loves one admits all one's enemies."

Mr. Symons thinks and challenges thought: (Of Wordsworth) "What seems to me his greatest, as it is certainly his most characteristic poem, *The Leech-Gatherer*." Or again, "The word joy occurs in his work more frequently than perhaps any other emotional word." "Scott remains an improviser in rhyme, not a poet." (Of Coleridge's speculative temperament) "Belief is itself an action of the mind." (Of Coleridge's critical notes) "They contain the most fundamental criticism of literature that has ever been attempted." (Of Byron) "Most of his life he was a personality looking out for its own formula." "Byron has power without wisdom." "Byron is the supreme incarnation of the natural man." "*Childe Harold* is a bad guide-book, and not always an honest or intelligent comment of the observer." (Of Shelley) "*Epipsychidion* celebrates love with icy ecstasy." "*Julian and Maddalo* has set the pattern of the modern poem." "Shelley was the one perfectly equipped man of letters of his circle . . . His 'Defense of Poetry' . . . is the most just and noble eulogy of poetry that exists." Lamb was "born a gipsy of the mind." "Campbell shares with Longfellow the position of the favorite poet in elementary schools." "Keats was more than a decadent, but he was a decadent." "The poetry of

Blake is poetry of the mind, abstract in substance, concrete in form; its passion is the passion of the imagination, its emotion is the emotion of thought; its beauty is the beauty of ideas" (p. 42). "In his poetry there is . . . nothing indeed but the absolute affirmation of that energy which is eternal delight." (Of Hood's *Bridge of Sighs*) "The fragility of the metre, its swiftness, as of running water, the piercing daintiness of the words, which state and denounce in a song, go to make a poem that is like music and like a cry, and means something terribly close and accusing." Throughout all the volume there is an eloquence born of its subject, but writing itself independently and independently valid.

We can neglect "no histories of literature, nor essays about it;" and among these for the period treated there is nothing worthier in its own field — the individual figures in the Romantic period — than the volume under review. For the interpretation of the title chosen—*The Romantic Movement*—we must, however, still depend on Phelps and Beers and George Brandes; to that, in a strict sense, Mr. Symons contributes nothing.

FREDERICK H. SYKES.



PENGUIN ISLE and JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE. By Anatole France.
Translated by various hands. New York: John Lane Co. 1909.

"Et sur son beau rire un faune presse une grappe de raisin vermeil."

Five hundred copies of Anatole's "Works," handsomely brought out, are launched upon the American public. More than this number will probably not be required. It would take all of Mr. Wendell's tact, all of Dr. Eliot's length of life to explain fully why.

One may concede that the translation, considering its impossibility, is fairly well done. *Penguin Isle* is particularly well done. It often reads as exceptionally fine English of the Swiftian type; at times it even gives the illusion of having once remotely been exceptionally fine French. Were it a question simply of conveying sober narration, facts, or medium ideas, there could be no cavilling about this enterprise.

But Anatole France does not belong to the Literature of